



FREE Policy Brief No. 3 - Women's Football and Female Fans

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EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



FREE POLICY BRIEF No. 3 – WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AND FEMALE FANS

This is the third of three policy briefs based on findings from the FREE project. It summarises results from the project's research stream on the feminisation of football.

March 2015

INTRODUCTION

To many in Europe, football epitomises masculinity. The sport is often depicted as the very activity around which men gather and socialise, both as players and as spectators; and from which women are excluded by men – or from which women self-exclude. Yet, football can make a very convincing claim to being the N°1 participant team sport for women in Europe today. Women may even be described somehow emphatically as 'the future of football' in official publications (the margins for growth in the men's sport is unquestionably more limited). However, the situation is less rosy when it comes to football as a spectator sport for women, who typically experience sexism and symbolic violence in the stadium.

To what extent is football a sport for women today – both as players and as supporters? What can be done to help ensure a fairer balance between men and women? Given the centrality of football in the definition of masculinities in Europe, this is not a trivial question. Equality between men and women has been a founding principle of the Union ever since the Rome treaty and will no doubt remain a target for years, if not decades to come. Can football help to progress the goals set out by the 2010-5 Strategy for equality between women and men? How? In order to answer these questions, the project sought to produce evidence through a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Two other policy briefs from the FREE project deal in more detail with two specific sub-topics: findings from the research stream on football stakeholders and governance; as well as from the historical, sociological and anthropological research streams.

‘Football is for the men, not for the women’ – the sexist stereotype is enduring at many levels: in the public; in the media; in decision-making circles. The whistle is frequently blown on this topic in academic literature as well as in journalist reports. Conversely, football official governing bodies have made the development of women’s football a high-level priority. The FREE project sought to investigate¹ this paradox by looking at the complete picture: both the success story (and plans to further it) and the obstacles to the development of women’s football.

1. Setting the scene: the difficult beginnings of women’s football

The history of football has long been a topic of research: it is well known now. There are national and international histories of the sport from a variety of angles (social, institutional, economic...). However, with rare exceptions, the focus has always been on the male sport. ‘Football’ has always been understood as meaning ‘Men’s football’. Without further qualification, ‘The World Cup’ always means the men’s competition – so are the Euro and other continental competitions, so are the national Leagues and Cups. *De facto*, there is a male hegemony on football. If and when mentioned, the rise of the women’s game is often described as a recent phenomenon.

Less well known, yet undoubtedly established by historians, is the modicum of success football enjoyed as a sport for women in an earlier period. From the militant beginnings in the mid-1890s to the early 1920s, there was a first golden age for women’s football. During World War I, many men left their job to fight in a conflict which ended up being very long. Women filled the roles left vacant by the men, did the work men used to do and this arguably constituted a first major step in their emancipation. In parallel, it is during this period that they took up football comparatively *en masse*: it became a real participant sport for women, notably in France and in the UK. Women’s football as a spectators’ sport arguably reached its peak in 1920 – in England, Dick Kerr’s Ladies played against St Helen Ladies in front of a crowd nearing 53 000 spectators in Liverpool. The Tarpeian rock is close to the Capitol: this success alarmed football authorities. It led the (English) Football Association (inventors of the modern game in 1863) to ban women from playing on its grounds in 1921. Women were forbidden to play football in the UK – and effectively, though not always explicitly so, in other European countries too. Following the loss of influence of ‘the’ FA on football, the women’s game enjoyed a renaissance outside the established institutions in the 1960s. The European governing body, UEFA, ended up recommending that national Football Associations integrated and developed women’s football. The English FA relented in 1971 and lifted its ban. As of 1972, formal or informal bans were no longer in place in any country.

2. Women’s football’s growth and development

As a participants sport, women’s football has grown ever since. The number of women playing football in Europe has increased five times in the 30 years between 1985 & 2014. There are 7 countries with more than 60 000 players each (6 in the Union: Denmark, England, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands; plus Norway). In 2014, there are 1 208 558 female players across UEFA – including 1 038 419 in the Union. (See table 1: all EU countries are included, plus Turkey).²

Football can even convincingly claim to be the number one team sport for women in Europe. Out of the 2 603 859 women playing the three major European team sports for which figures are available, 56% play football, 28% play volleyball & 26% play handball (source: UEFA).

Women’s football has also become better organised at the top level, and begins to compare favourably with the men’s sport in this respect. There is a full programme and calendar of international competitions at both national and club level:

- 🏆 a quadrennial World Cup for national teams, held in Europe twice (1995 in Norway and 2011 in Germany, the 2019 edition will be in France), and won by European teams thrice (Norway 1995, Germany 2003 & 2007);

¹ For details on the research methods please refer to the section ‘Research Parameters’ on page 11.

² Turkey has been systematically included in the FREE project’s research, as one of the FREE project partners is in this country and the topic is, indeed, an *enlarged* Europe.

- an Olympic tournament, which is held in higher regard than the men's equivalent (it is open to everyone, the men's competition being essentially an under-23 tournament);
- quadrennial continental competitions for national teams, incl. the Euro for UEFA countries;
- 53 out of 54 UEFA member associations have a senior women's national team that takes part in the World Cup, the Olympics and the Euro;
- a European competition for the top clubs: the UEFA Women's Champions League, an equivalent to the men's competition;
- fully functioning national Leagues in most countries (51 of 54 UEFA countries in 2014);
- international competitions for young players: under-20 and under-17 FIFA World Cups; under-19 and under-17 UEFA Euros.

Of these competitions, at least, the World Cup, the Euro and the Women's Champions League have become global events, if not mega-events since the 2011 edition, 'a watershed World Cup', in terms of attendance and broadcast: it attracted an audience of 249 million for at least 20 minutes and 408 million for at least 3 minutes. The average audience for games in that competition was above 13 million per game.

Women's football is also taken increasingly seriously and the object of much attention from the national football associations. Apart from Lithuania, Luxembourg, Finland all countries in the EU have declared to UEFA that they have a 'dedicated women's football plan'. The most advanced of such development plans may include Germany and France.

Table 1. Number of registered female football players³ in the EU & Turkey, 2009-14. Source: UEFA

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
LT	510	595	595	556	656	618
LV	538	647	497	562	643	657
BG	370	350	350	394	850	870
SI						1 121
EE		689		752	908	1 173
CY	741	878	878	977	994	1 190
HR	1 627	1 732	1 732	998	1 133	1 411
MT	1 231	1 318	1 096	1 220	1 577	1 684
LU	1 296	1 793	1 793	1 056	1 323	1 907
PT	1 706	1 683	1 683	1 743	1 974	2 116
RO	400	450	550	550	2 444	3 150
TR	18163	48691	48691	63513	64516	4138
EL	1 770	3 242	1 770	3 410	3 997	4 606
SK	645	880	890	1 300	1 420	7 153
CZ	16 154	18 776	18 776	16 900	11 500	7 577
PL	4 250	5 000	4 000	4 500	12 725	16 183
IT	11 987	12 975	12 975	22 743	22 115	20 563
HU	4 720	4 148	10 472	15 928	19 526	21 391
BE	16 400	16 562	15 600	18 410	21 634	22 089
IE	16 500	21 890	21 590	23 085	22 941	23 427
FI	25 836	26 423	25 070	26 776	26 867	26 507
AT	13 000	17 000	17 000	37 000	20 000	28 121
ES	23 485	61 394	68 399	27 609	28 154	31 314
DK	63 736	71 273	66 671	77 889	70 641	72 890
FR				58 350	65 001	73 484
UK	6 125	6 258	5 394	100 181	106 273	103 363
NL	120 250	124 100	124 100	127 488	131 948	137 525
SE	152 875	157 661	119 060	159 305	165 259	167 949
DE				250 000	262 220	258 380

³ all ages, does not include school sports, or sport for all; the source for TR's 2014 figure has been double checked

3. Remaining problems

However, some real problems remain.

- 🌐 Football may be Europe's number one women's team sports in terms of participants, it is also the one that includes the fewest women as a share of the total players. 7% of registered players in UEFA are female, which does not compare favourably with volleyball: 52% or handball: 42%. Within the EU, even the national associations with the highest proportion of women boast rates above 20% but lower than 30%.
- 🌐 The World Cup and the Champions League may be mega events but they are contested by amateurs. The game is not really professional (a professional is defined by UEFA as 'a player who has a written contract with a club and is paid more for her footballing activity than the expenses she incurs'). At max a handful of the top clubs are fully professional: Paris Saint-Germain or Frankfurt for example. According to UEFA statistics, in 2014 there are 1 278 professional women footballers from 17 countries (including TR) in 68 clubs within 12 Member States (players from 5 countries are professional in a foreign club). This is already a small number (roughly the equivalent of two to three fully professional men divisions in one country – England on its own has four). However, being a woman playing football professionally is a different experience in Romania (where the cost of living is low but where few top football players might be found) and in the recently created Football Association Women's Super League (FA WSL) in the UK. (See table 2)

Table 2. Professional female football players and clubs in the EU & Turkey, 2014. Source: UEFA

	TR	MT	BE	LT	CZ	EL	CY	AT	HU	FI	DK	ES	FR	DE	UK	RO	SE	EU +TR
Professional players	1	1	2	3	4	5	8	15	17	20	30	34	78	81	226	330	423	1 278
Clubs with pro. players			-	1	-	-	2	2	1	5	3	6	9	12	8	8	11	68

- 🌐 One of the most important problems within women's football is the lack of money. Budgets remain tiny. Of the clubs polled by the European Club Association (ECA) Women's Football Committee in 2014:
 - only 3 had a budget over 1 000 000 €;
 - 3 also had a budget below 50 000 €.
 - Although data for Slovenia, Ireland and Italy is missing, the total budget for women's football in all 28 Member States is 61 220 322 €. This is the cost of one or two players in the men's professional game. (See table 3)

This is largely due to the paucity of sponsors for women's football. Of the 28 EU countries a minority (10) reported having specific commercial sponsors for the women's game in 2014: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and England plus Northern-Ireland (which in football matters have two different national associations/leagues). In addition, because of the small number of spectators, there is no significant income through gate receipts.

4. Obstacles to development of professional women's football: media and spectators

Women's football is caught in a vicious circle. Public interest remains low, with the exception of the mega-events. Although the World Cup, the Olympics or UEFA's Women's Champions League may attract great numbers of spectators (for example, 80 203 watched the women's Olympic football final in 2012), on average, audiences in other competitions remain low. Some **national teams** have a sizeable audience (the German one attracts an average of 15 000 spectators, and the French one nearly 10 000), but in 2014, the average audience of all 28 national teams within the European Union (plus Turkey) sits uncomfortably around the 2 000 spectators mark.

Overall, **women's club football** fails to attract a large public – some would say it even fails to attract any public. The average audience for women's top league football in the EU is around 350 spectators. Only Germany (2 500) and Spain (1 000) reach a four-figure mark. This is particularly problematic since the league is the yearlong competition that generates income for most actors (clubs, leagues, national associations, players) in the common business models of team sports (including but not limited to men's football). (See table 3 for an EU-wide comparison of attendances and budget) As a result, the European Club Association states that gate receipts are the tiniest source of income for women's teams.

The lack of public in the stadiums is cited by television broadcasters as evidence for the assumption that 'our audience doesn't want to see that'. But without media coverage, women's football is unable to either develop 'stars' or attract sponsors. This, in turn, is not conducive to an increase in the number of spectators... The vicious circle goes on.

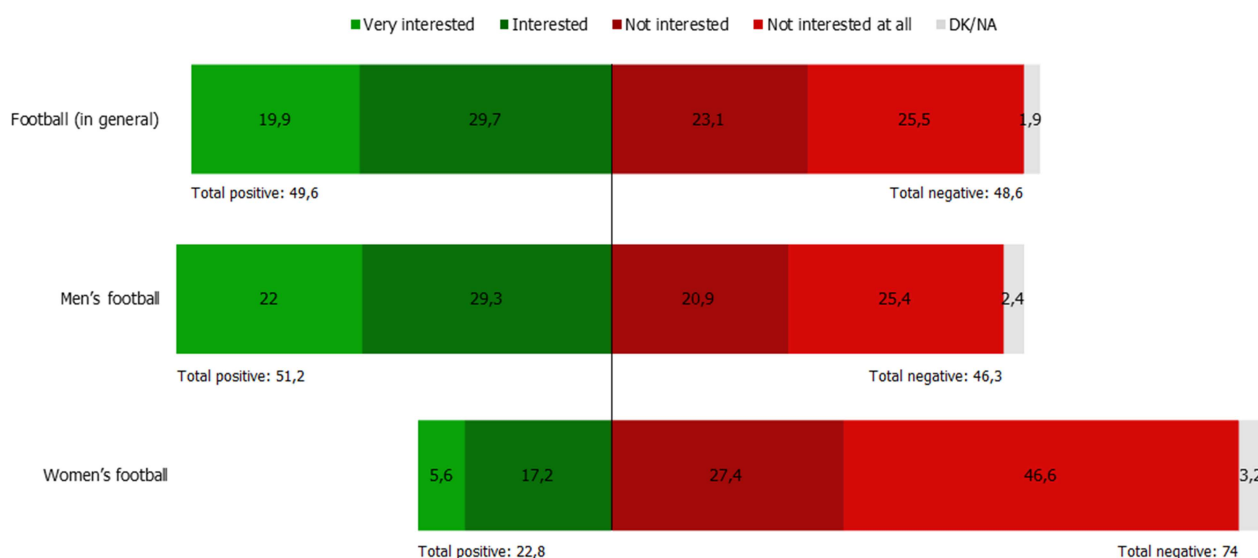
Table 3. Women's football attendances and budget in the EU & Turkey, 2014. Source: UEFA

	Average attendance at national team matches	Average attendance at top national league matches	Budget for women's football
LU	400	120	91 000 €
LT	150	50	147 000 €
RO	300	50	150 000 €
LV	100	50	195 204 €
BG	200	100	200 000 €
MT	500	400	250 000 €
CY	50	50	270 000 €
SK	350	60	300 000 €
EE	350	40	466 800 €
HR	500	50	500 000 €
CZ	700	250	600 000 €
EL	700	300	904 300 €
BE	2 000	500	935 000 €
PL	2 000	200	990 952 €
HU	250	50	1 000 000 €
ES	2 000	1 000	1 200 000 €
FI	1 300	155	1 254 100 €
TR	650	300	1 364 000 €
AT	1 000	200	1 900 000 €
DK	2 000	100	2 500 000 €
PT	1 000	500	2 577 466 €
NL	3 000	300	3 200 000 €
SE	4 300	800	4 374 000 €
DE	15 000	2 500	7 000 000 €
FR	9 400	800	10 500 000 €
UK	2 294	191	19 714 500 €
IE	1 200	200	
IT	4 000	500	
EU	2 039	352	61 220 322 €
EU +TR	1 989	351	62 584 322 €

The lack of interest for women's football is confirmed in FREE's research. The FREE CATI survey⁴ shows that while 49.6% of respondents are interested in football in general and 51.3% are interested in men's football specifically, only 22.8% are interested in women's football and a staggering 46.6% are not interested in it at all (See graph 1 for details). The FREE Online survey shows that the attitudes of the attentive public (97.2% of which is interested or very interested in football) is somewhat less hostile to women's football: 4.8% is very interested, 15.8% is interested and 26.2% is somewhat interested. Still, even among this public, 53.1% are 'not so much interested' or 'not interested at all' in women's football.

4 For details on the research methods please refer to the section 'Research Parameters' on page 11.

Graph 1. Interest in football: in general, men & women (percentages). Source: FREE CATI survey (2014)



However, there is clear evidence showing that *when* international top level women's football is on television, it does generate interest. In every country where the number of broadcasting hours for the Women's World Cup increased between 2007 and 2011, this was also followed by an increase in average audiences.

5. Obstacles to the development of grassroots women's football: the structures of football

Currently, as stated above, only 7% of all football players in Europe are women. There is a large number of women playing football compared with other team sports, but this is a very low figure compared with men's football. It prompts the question: what is preventing the development of grassroots women's football? The answer is very simple: the structures. To put it simply, there are not enough clubs where women may play football. Among all the 28 member states, 13 (CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, HU, IT, LT, PL, PT, RO, SK, SE) reported in 2014 to UEFA that the average distance to a local club where women can play football is *above* 20 km (the average distance may therefore actually be much higher). Every parent knows this is much more than they are willing (or simply able) to drive their children – unless the child is *very* determined, but this creates a selection: only the strong-minded ones get to play football; they remain a minority and don't get to enjoy all the social benefits of this team sport.

Partly because of this lack of club for women's of all ages, football may still have the label to be a men's sport: girls may be attracted to other sports, seen as more 'feminine': gymnastics (in various forms), dancing or tennis. For example, research has shown that the favourite sport among girls is – without any doubt – horseback riding.

6. Obstacles to the development of women's football: structures of governance

More generally, the structures of football are simply unwelcoming to women (even unwittingly) and prevent many women from aiming at and/or attaining positions of power. Progress has been made: for instance, there are women committees in every member state apart from IE, FI, LT, NL, SK, SE (TR doesn't have one either). Issues remain, though. Firstly, the average proportion of female employees in national associations is below a third (31.88%). Only IT, PL, CY, HR are approaching parity (between 45 & 52%). Secondly, very few women reach managerial level: there are typically between 1 and 10 in every member state. There are 11 in IE, about 140 in the UK but this large difference is likely to be due to a difference in the meaning given to the word 'managerial'. Thirdly, the average number of women in committees of national football associations throughout member states is 11, with a very strong difference between countries with no women in committees (IE, SK) and IT which has 48 women in different committees.

Figures for women at board level are likely to be much lower. The glass ceiling for women is overall very low, even though local initiatives have been taken: for example, the second highest executive at the French

football association (Fédération Française de Football) is a woman (Brigitte Henriques) and she was elected by a large constituency within the football association. This is certainly a strong signal.

Sending a similar, though considerably weaker signal, UEFA has also nominated one woman as a member of its executive committee: Karen Espelund. Although figures are hard to gather, there are even fewer women in positions of authority at the level of clubs – both professional and amateur. Sandra Schwedler, newly elected (2015) President of the board of FC St Pauli seems to be the only woman in this position within a professional club throughout the Union.

The glass ceiling issue in women's football is not limited to governance: it also extends to every position of authority, e.g. to positions as coaches and, of course, referees.

Women football **coaches** are few and far between: there are officially 21 164 nationally qualified coaches in Europe. However, on average in the Union (excluding SE, DE and Wales where data is unavailable), only 16% of the coaches of women's teams are women. The percentage ranges from 1% or less (in FR and HR) to 60% in BG (all other countries have a proportion of women coaching women below 50%). The phenomenon is even clearer when UEFA licences are looked at: only 1% is held by women. It goes without saying that men's teams are coached by men only, with the exception of Corinne Diacre who coaches a second division football team in France (Clermont).

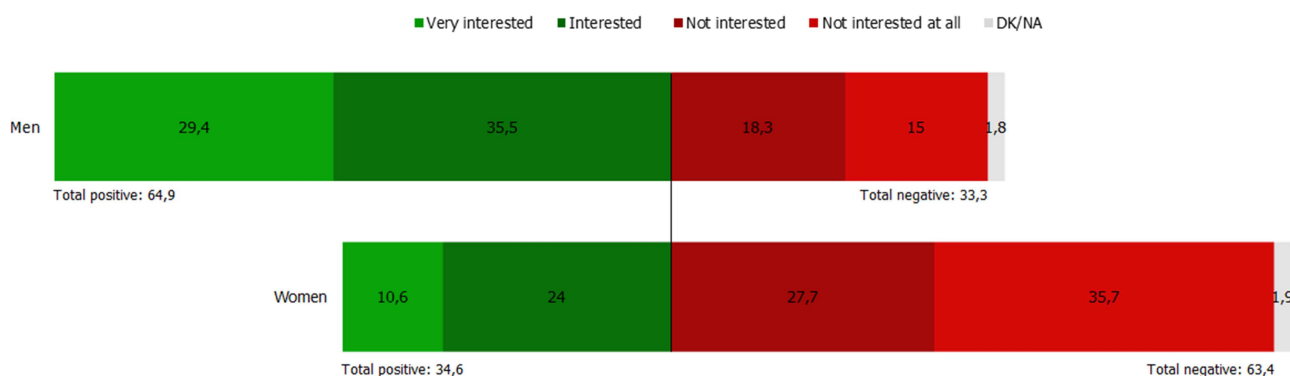
Refereeing is another position of authority within the game. In 2014, there are 7 461 women who are FIFA qualified referees within UEFA. Out of these 2 414 are in DE, 1 693 in IT and 1 098 in the UK. Some large member states barely have any, though: FR only has 27, and ES 15 – combined, this is fewer than NL (51). More important: the number of FIFA women referees within UEFA declined by 44 from the previous season. However, the number of women refereeing in the top 3 men's division of any country is on the increase and all EU countries now have women who referee men's matches.

Although progress with regard to women's integration in the world of football has been made, there is still a huge gender gap with regard to participation and power. It appears very clearly that self-regulation is not working and that externally imposed regulation is needed to move towards equality between women and men in football.

7. Obstacles to the development of female fandom: football as a male preserve and discrimination in the stadium

Historians have shown that the development of football is in a (very large) part linked with the development of men's homo-social practices within the British working class at the end of the 19th Century. Men would gather to play and to watch football, while women would be left at home. Although the picture has changed slightly, football, especially the club stadium can still be seen as a male preserve. This is vindicated by the results of the FREE survey: only 10% of the respondents of the FREE Online survey (2010) were women. Also, the interest in 'football in general' clearly showed a difference based on the gender of the respondents: 64.9% of men were 'interested' or 'very interested' in football; 63.4% of women were 'not interested' or 'not interested at all' in football – figures that are quite contrasting!

Graph 3. Interest in football in general: from men & women (percentages). Source: FREE CATI survey (2014)

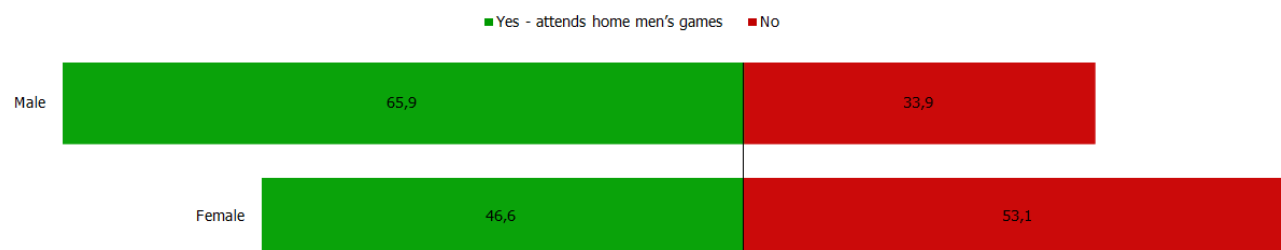


Consequently, as shown in the FREE CATI survey, women follow the different football competitions less than men do: 36.3% of women don't follow men's football at any level; compared with 14.3% of men; less than 50% of women are following *all* of the levels of competition identified (FIFA World Cup, Summer Olympics, UEFA European Championship, UEFA Champions League, Other continental championships,

UEFA Europa League, National Championships, Other European national championships, regional and local competitions).

Women also engage much less in the activities supporters normally do. Most importantly, very few women go to the stadium to see football games. For example, even the women who declare they support a men's club attend home matches less than men do.

Graph 4. Percentages of men & women who attend men football's home game. Source: FREE CATI survey (2014)



The football stadium, in particular the supporters' stands, is the definitive male preserve. As ethnographic research and interview studies have shown, a great number of male supporters reject female supporters: 'I don't think women should be in the stadium' is still often heard. Moreover, many male fans are prejudiced against women and state, for instance, that 'Women are incapable of understanding the rules'. Most important, female fans are often subject to verbal abuse in fan chants. In some European clubs, songs like 'We are [name of the club], we are here. We screw your women and drink your beer' can be heard: they reify women, who become passive objects for men's pleasure, without the right to consent. However, in a tiny minority of European stadiums 'family seating' is provided where women are meant to be more welcome.

There are two different kinds of response to misogyny and 'male domination' in the fan stands.

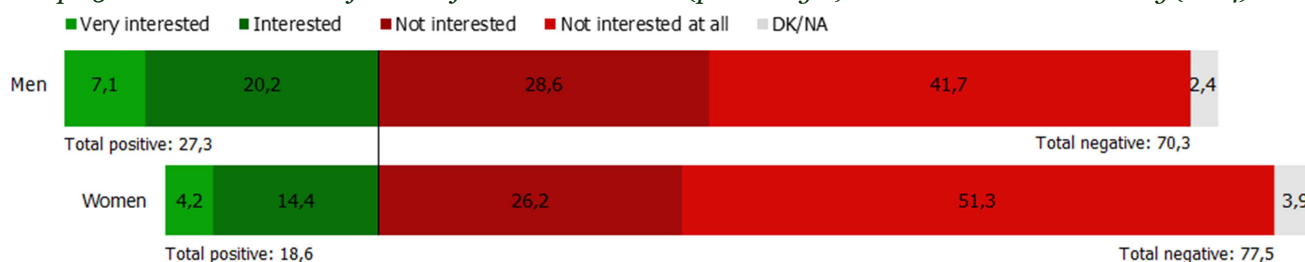
Firstly, some female supporters internalise sexism. They join existing groups, which are nearly all-male, they embrace the existing supporter culture, including its misogynistic aspects: they comply with its habits and its rules; they act as 'companions'. These fans typically embrace sexism as 'part of the culture', and trivialise it: 'fan chants are fun, they are not serious, we don't mean it' are typical responses. This illustrates an important aspect of discriminatory discourse: it can be said in jest, with a degree of irony from the group who says it; however this irony is often lost on people outside the group, who can only see the offensive aspect. This is best explained in a quote from a female supporter 'When they sing "get your tits out for the lads", they don't sing about me. I also sing along, by the way.'

Secondly, a minority of female supporters oppose sexism and join forces in women only fan groups. Those groups have been established in various European countries, for example the 'Pink Lions' or 'Female Vikings' in Denmark. The members of these groups may decide to claim a specifically feminine 'football identity': they choose logos or colours which they perceive as 'feminine' in order to share their messages. One said 'We wanted to show that we are women, but also like football. We wanted to make the logo as feminine as possible, so that there's no doubt what this is about.' Equally, they often challenge and reject sexism.

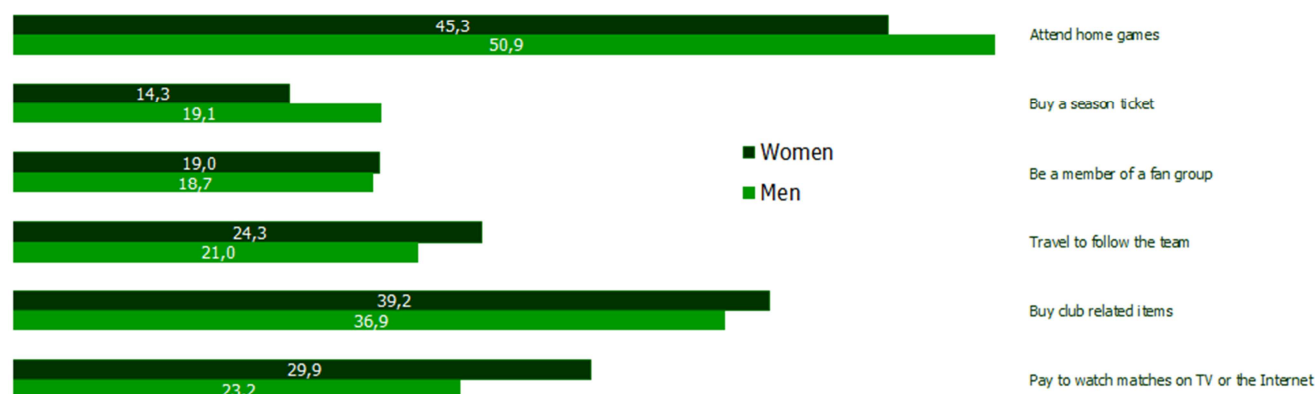
Football's difficulty to integrate female fans has a consequence on how the fandom of women's teams develops. Women's football has only few supporters. Most interestingly, women are even less interested in women's football than men! (see graph 5) Even a smaller proportion of women declares attending women's football games, or buying a season ticket than men (see graph 6).

In the FREE CATI survey, the only fan activities pertaining to women's football that women proportionally do more than men are activities that involve distance: paying to watch games on TV or the Internet (29.9% vs 23.2%); travelling to follow the team (24.3% vs 21.0%) – although their interest in women's football is undoubted: more women buy club related items than men (39.2% vs 36.9%) and a comparable proportion is member of a fan group (19% vs 18.7%). Women may be more committed to women's football, yet put off attending the games or buying season tickets!

Graph 5. Interest in women's football: from men & women (percentages). Source: FREE CATI survey (2014)



Graph 6. Football-related activities: percentages of men & women interested in women's football. Source: FREE CATI survey (2014)



POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As can be seen from the findings (Evidence and Analysis)

- ☉ The number of women playing football rises but remains low in most countries;
- ☉ Media coverage has increased following the 2011 World Cup, but still marginalises women's 'every day football' and seems to focus mostly on international games;
- ☉ Attendances at women's games are on the increase but remain low, even in countries such as Germany and France, where women's football is partly professional;
- ☉ The number of women in leadership positions of football associations is low, even in organisations dealing with women's football.

The following recommendations are largely based on this evidence and on already existing best practices.

Recommendation 1: encourage women's and girls' grassroots football

Every Member State must put into practice a plan that ensures a girl or woman of any age who wants to play football is able to do so. This means

- ☉ Mapping women's football clubs teams;
- ☉ Identifying gaps in the territory;
- ☉ Setting targets for numbers of women's football teams in general, and in particular in places where the distance to a football team is above the number of kilometres judged acceptable in the country;

Depending on the local circumstances, the creation of new women's clubs or teams may take place within

- ☉ men's football clubs; or men's clubs with a small number of female teams;
- ☉ in addition, new women's football clubs should be founded, either on their own or backed by an existing institution (school, university, multi-sports club).

Recommendation 2: encourage media coverage of women's football

Every Member State is free to decide how to promote women's football. Our recommendation is that they should:

- 🌐 review the place dedicated to the coverage of Women's Sports (including Women's Football) in the media; and
- 🌐 take action to encourage women's sports being covered and broadcast on a par with men's sports, especially on national television, when it is paid through taxes (which means men and women equally contribute to the funding of the channels and should therefore gain equal attention).

The European Union should:

- 🌐 endorse initiatives like the *Journée Internationale du Sport Féminin* (International Female Sports Day) put into place in France: in the media 24 hours are dedicated to covering women's sport only;
- 🌐 create a fund (similar to the French fund) to help finance the coverage of women's sport by television (production costs etc.).

Recommendation 3: promoting women in positions of authority

Following the French example, where

- 🌐 national sports associations must include women on their board, in proportion of the number of female licensed player, with a minimum of one seat (article L. 124-1 du Code du Sport)
- 🌐 the Ministry of Sports only recognises national sports associations which put into practice a plan for the feminisation, which includes promoting parity and gender equality at every level (national, regional, local)

The European Union should demand that:

- 🌐 the board of every European (Continental) sports association (in football UEFA); and
- 🌐 the board of every national football association; and
- 🌐 the board of every professional football club;

must include, at least one woman, and a representation of women that is consistent with the proportion of women who hold a license in the federation (national association);

The European Union should encourage:

- 🌐 the training and promotion of female referees;
- 🌐 the training and promotion of female coaches;
- 🌐 the training and promotion of women for leadership positions at, local, regional and national level.

Recommendation 4: reducing sexism in the football stadium

In line with the 'Strategy for Equality' thematic priority 'dignity, integrity and an end to gender violence', the EU should

- 🌐 Assign the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) the duty to monitor and publish a yearly report on sexist abuse received by women's fans in the stadiums;
- 🌐 Take part in anti-discrimination action at European level (UEFA) and within Member States in order to ensure that sexism is not trivialised but seen as equally important as other forms of discriminations.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

The FREE Project has brought together scholars from very different academic backgrounds – sociology, anthropology, history, gender studies, political science – with the explicit objective to produce genuinely interdisciplinary research that interconnected a range of research methods in the most appropriate way.

Data collection included both various qualitative methods of investigation and quantitative surveys. The evidence provided and analysed in this policy brief was produced by a range of complementary research activities, especially:

- 🌐 Desk research on primary sources (e.g. archival data; membership numbers, budgets);
- 🌐 Sociological field work (in-depth interviews with individuals and/or groups, including female-only fan groups);
- 🌐 Ethnographic field work by researchers (participant observation on various occasions, and in different settings between 2012 and 2014, and with a wide range of males and females, i.e. members of the football-interested public (e.g. audio-visual field diaries in selected countries);
- 🌐 Quantitative online survey (non-representative, attentive public with an interest in football), carried out in 8 languages between September 2013 and February 2014 and receiving a total of 17 516 responses out of which 8 299 respondents completed all questions;
- 🌐 Quantitative CATI survey (representative population samples in all target countries), carried out in 8 languages by sub-contractor BVA (Paris) in December 2013 and covering a total of 7 245 respondents.

The target countries concerned by the quantitative surveys were Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Disclaimer:

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PROJECT IDENTITY

Project name	Football Research in an Enlarged Europe (FREE)
Coordinator	Albrecht Sonntag, ESSCA School of Management, Angers (France) albrecht.sonntag@essca.fr
Consortium	ESSCA School of Management Angers, France. Københavns Universitet Copenhagen, Denmark. Loughborough University Loughborough, United Kingdom. Middle East Technical University Ankara, Turkey. Universitat de València Valencia, Spain. Universität Stuttgart Stuttgart, Germany. Universität Wien Vienna, Austria. Université de Franche-Comté Besançon, France. Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza Poznan, Poland.
Funding scheme	FP7 Framework Programme for Research of the European Union – Area 8 “Socio-economic sciences and Humanities” Collaborative project in activity 5.2 “Diversities and Commonalities in Europe”, Call “The Anthropology of European Integration”.
Duration	01 st April 2012 – 31 st March 2015 (36 months).
Budget	EU contribution: 2 433 362 €.
Website	www.free-project.eu
For more information	Contact: Dr Albrecht Sonntag, albrecht.sonntag@essca.fr
Further reading	Already published online working papers on www.free-project.eu . Forthcoming FREE book series published by Palgrave Macmillan (2015)